2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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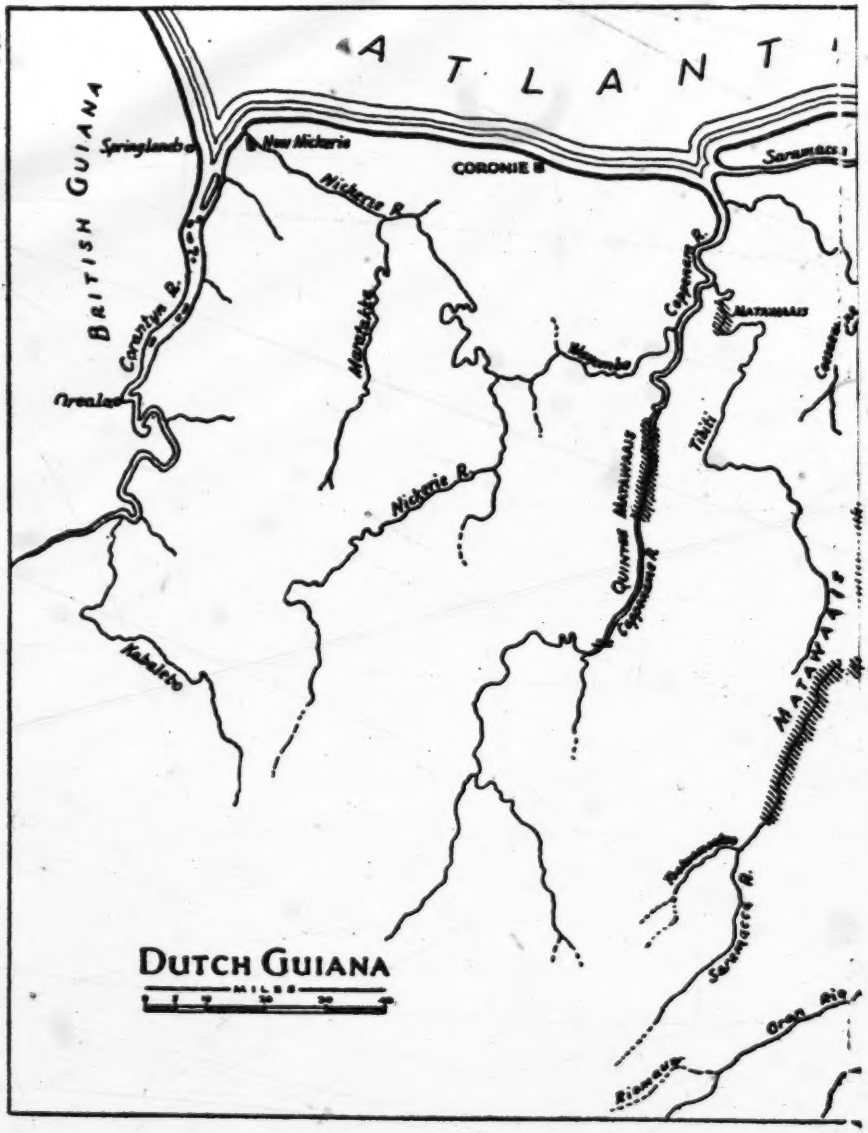

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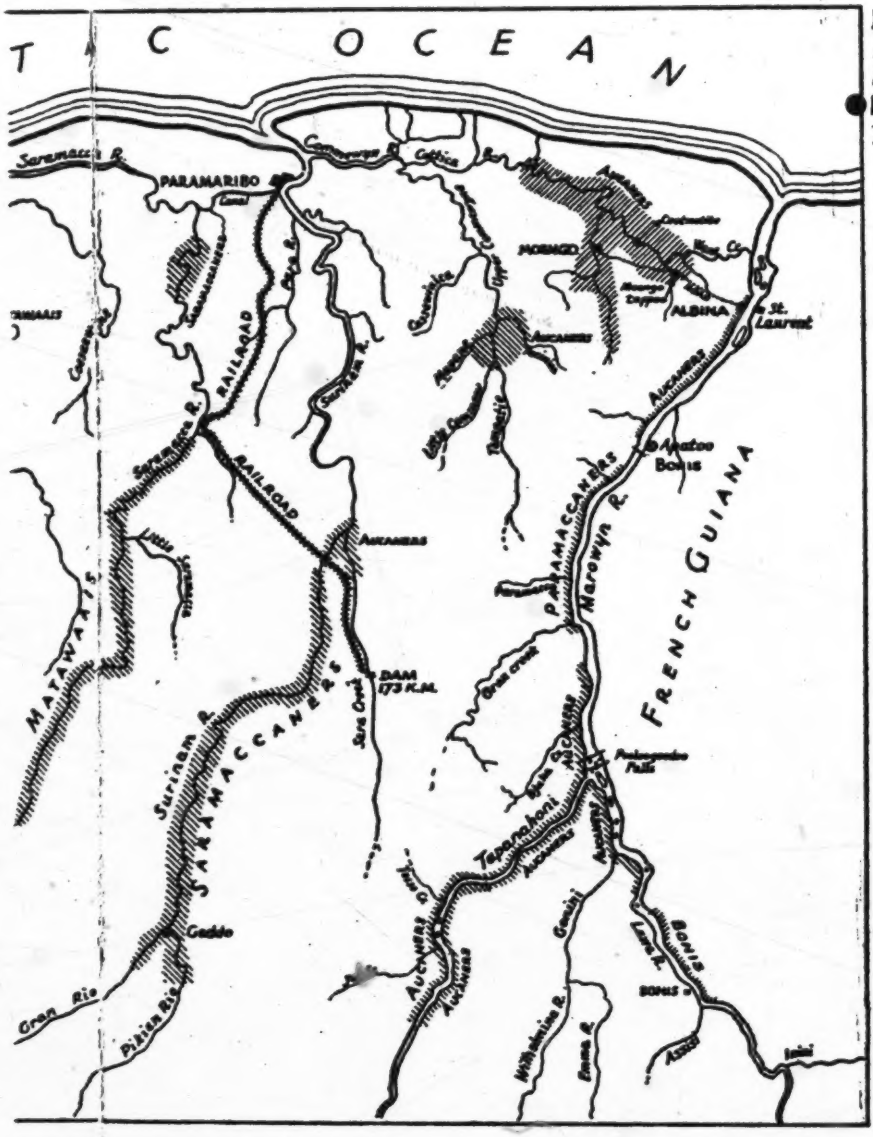
Distribution of Bush Negro Tribes
Drawn after a sketch by

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



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gro Tribes in Dutch Guiana
: sketch by Rogalli

[Facing p. 100, Sec. B

B
R /509 cont./
19 October 1958 – January 1959), expeditions whose principal aim
114 was the sociological study of these populations.
121

/510/

Social Structure and Way of Life

B
101 The Boni Refugee Blacks. The Boni are one of the above-mentioned
[175] tribes of the Refugee Blacks, reconstituted in the course of the eighteenth century by rebel African slaves who escaped from
B Surinam plantations (Dutch Guiana).
[131] These tribes (Saramaka, Djuka, Paramaka, Boni) live for the
[161] most part along the rivers of the interior of Surinam. They group together a total of 25,000 persons.
B
161 With very rare exceptions, the Refugee Blacks are pure Africans.
[144] These populations, vigorous and well adapted to the country, have experienced in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a remarkable demographic increase, attested to by all the authors. Descended from small rebel groups which could not have contained more than a few hundred women, they are now estimated at more than 25,000 persons.
B
162 The Boni of the Upper Maroni, the subject of the present study,
103 number approximately 800, of whom 660 are on the French bank
[161] (the villages of Boniville, l'Enfant Perdu, Loka, Asisi, Papaïston, and Kormotibo) and 140 on the Surinam bank (the village of Kotika). These villages were established long ago.
B
613 Each of them groups together a matrilineage, i.e., the
621 descendants in the uterine line of one single founding ancestress;
769 certain villages know their genealogy in its entirety back to this ancestress, who must have lived at the end of the eighteenth century. The members of the lineage are united by the cult of the
B ancestors, which binds them firmly to their natal village and to
[622] their land. The social system is based essentially on this cult,
[793] the chief of the village being above all the priest of the ancestors.
Strictly speaking, there is no marriage, but only an acknowl-
B
581 edged concubinage which entails neither a contract between the

R /511 cont./
161 The Oayana of the Upper Maroni in 1958 numbered about 240,
175 of whom 70 were on the Surinam side. About 250 others lived on the
[162] Yari and the Parou in Brazil, altogether some 500 persons. They numbered about 3,000 at the time of Leblond (1788), and the explorer Coudreau around 1890 estimated them again at 1,500. All the authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have noticed
R their further decline, but without understanding the cause.
361 The Oayana move their villages every ten years on the aver-
433 age. No cult of the ancestors binds them to their land; they are
R only concerned about a favorable place for agriculture and fishing.
621 As far as can be judged, a village used to group together the
613 members of a matrilineage. There were two types of marriage,
582 one endogamous, between cross cousins in the classificatory sense,
591 the other exogamous; in this latter case, the man would leave his group to establish himself among the relatives of his wife;
R nowadays this principle of residence is breached by individualism.
621 Marriage and residence are entirely free. The composition of the
571 villages changes constantly; a simple dispute suffices to cause the
R departure of a faction which goes to join the neighboring village.
178 Nevertheless the social and political decadence have not had any catastrophic influence on the way of life. The Oayana remain
R firmly attached to their beliefs, their language, and their techniques.
241 The Oayana are above all agriculturalists; their very large
262 clearings are cultivated with great care and provide for them the essentials of their diet.
R
433 After agriculture, fishing is their principal resource. Hunting and gathering come next.
R
517 All this activity leaves plenty of free time for finery, dancing, and, above all, doing nothing in their hammocks.

R /512/
R Geographic environment; way of life; diet. The Upper Maroni pre-
132 sents the characteristics of the humid equatorial environment. Lo-
● [131] cated at 3° 30' latitude, the country has an annual mean temperature of about 26°. The annual rainfall is about three meters, as against 3.5 meters at Cayenne.

6:Hurault--4 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/5/

CHAPTER I

MAN AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Country

133
[13] The Boni live along the middle course of the Lawa, principal tributary of the Maroni, above Abounasounga Falls. This region presents the same characteristics as the rest of Guiana: it is a very worn-down peneplain which, seen from the air, gives the impression of an immense plateau from which emerge every now and then isolated mountain massifs. When one travels across this peneplain, one perceives that in its detailed aspects it is very hilly everywhere; the terrain looks like an infinite covering of whitecaps of little hills as anonymous as the waves of the sea, whose always steep slopes end in swamps or pinotières drained by an infinitely complex maze of "criques" [creeks] (1); the shapes

1. In Guiana brooks and small rivers are called "criques."

and dimensions of these hills and valleys depend on the nature of the substratum, and their appearance on aerial photographs makes possible the drawing up of a concise geological map. The zones of "green rocks" are marked by much more important valleys and hills, reaching an altitude of 800 meters, with massive shapes and very steep slopes.

The other types of terrain most often lead to a very broken-up relief, the dimensions of the valleys and hills scarcely going over 300 meters, with local differences of altitude of from 50 to 100 meters.

/5 cont./

133 This extreme fragmentation of the relief must be remembered
182 as one of the ecological factors influencing the human peopling most directly; it renders the transport of heavy loads impracticable, the establishing of roads practically impossible. Men are led to
[361] settle along the rivers, which constitute the only routes of penetration toward the interior of the country.

133 All the important rivers flow into an alluvial valley whose
132 width varies from some tens of meters to a kilometer, dry during the greater part /6/ of the year, but flooded under several meters
134 of water during the great rains of May-June. This annual inunda-
241 tion makes the alluvial lands unfit for agriculture; the inhabitants of Guiana cultivate only sloping lands and even very steep slopes readily; for good drainage of the soil is indispensable for the raising of manioc whose tubers, which remain in the ground for more than a year, are threatened with rotting.

311 The cultivable zone is in fact closely limited around each village. Practically, it is limited to a strip of 1,500 to 2,000 meters along the banks of each watercourse accessible to pirogues.
[482] Transport of manioc tubers, carried on by the women several
[462] times a month, becomes impracticable if the distance to be covered with loads is greater than two kilometers at the maximum (1).

[101]
[131]
[184]

1. The Djuka, very numerous on the Tapanahoni, cultivate as far as three or four kilometers from the river; but in general, the Refugee Blacks prefer to build farming habitations at a distance of several days' by boat from their village when this gives them the possibility of farming in the neighborhood of the banks.

/8 cont./

experience of the American Indians, which seem the only utilizable ones in the interior of the country.

Thus these populations which are so varied have in large measure the same agriculture and the same food.

Basic crops are manioc, consumed in the form of couac (flour roasted and granulated) which is the base food, the Indian yam, and tubers analogous to taro (dachine, "Caribbean cabbage"). The Refugee Blacks plant mountain rice in addition. The Creoles do not plant rice but have on the other hand a greater variety of vegetables and fruits.

Men in Guiana live on the rivers; villages and cultivated lands are to be found on their banks; everywhere else one finds only the deserted forest; only Creole gold miners, constrained by their work, sometimes establish their villages far from watercourses. The Refugee Blacks, like the Indians, love the rivers where they find, along with water and light, the possibility of moving without hindrance; they are a people of canoeists; their traditions are widely influenced by life on the river, and their mode of living finds in this a deep originality.

In fact, setting aside the gold miners' villages, we can say that the populations of the Guianas living by exploitation of the natural resources of the country have a linear habitat: it can be estimated not in surface but in length, for it is limited to a band of one kilometer along each watercourse accessible to pirogues. These watercourses are limited in number, for one can take for granted that at a distance of some 20 kilometers from the source of each river, the congestion caused by fallen trees and parasitic vegetation prevents easy movement.

Actually, considering the very low density of the population, the small rivers are scarcely utilized except as fishing places.

All the rivers are interrupted by falls and rapids which render the use of large boats impossible. The pirogues of the Refugee

F 233 433 F [508] F 233 [132] [311] F [461] [464] F [433] [435] B 101 B 197 B 162 131 B 433 464

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Since about ten years ago Creole exploiters without any outside aid have built up a herd of several hundred head, principally with an eye to the provisioning of the mining center of Benzdorp. The existence of an airodrome and regular air connections permits envisaging the export of meat to the coast. The success of animal raising in the Upper Maroni seems to be attributable to a rainfall lower in total amount than on the coastal strip but better distributed, as well as to the nature of the soil. It is principally on the floodable alluvial strip bordering the river to a width of 500 to 600 meters that cattle find the most favorable conditions, taking refuge on the neighboring hills during the three weeks of annual inundation.

Winning pastures from the forest and defending them against the encroachment of the bush represents continual work, but it can be carried out on the Maroni far better than on the coast, thanks to the man power of the Refugee Blacks.

One cannot yet come to a conclusion on the profitableness of this animal raising. Like many other enterprises in Guiana it is handicapped by its too high cost price which prevents effective competition with imported products.

2) The populations of the Maroni, descending from rebel slaves of the 18th century, who are often called Refugee Blacks, are divided into three tribes: the Djuka, the Paramaka, and the Boni, whose customs are practically identical and whose dialects are very close. These dialects are variations of Taki-taki, vehicular language derived mainly from English, whose use was widespread in the time of slavery and which has become the national language of Surinam.

The Paramaka, 700 to 800 in number, occupy the lower part of the course of the Maroni from the first waterfall (Hermina) to the junction with Béiman Creek. They are not navigators but farmers and foresters, who furnish highly prized man power for the enterprises of the Saint-Laurent region.

/10 cont./

162 131 36 [103] 563 178 [181] The Boni, about 1,000 in number, occupy the course of the Lawa between Abounasounga Falls to the north and the falls of the Litani to the south. Their "great villages," that is, their residential villages, are: Agodé (Boniville), Kotika, Asisi, Loka, Papaïston, Kormotibo, Lapé, and l'Enfant Perdu. Three small villages founded more recently are established on the lower course of the Maroni. The territorial implantation of the Boni has been disturbed by the settlement of Creole gold miners on their territory for three quarters of a century. Their demographic situation is mediocre and their tribal organization, compared to that of the other tribes, has lost much of its strength. However, they still make up a human grouping full of strength and originality.

131 361 [162] [161] [648] [619] The Djuka, whose "great villages" are in Surinam territory on the /11/ Tapanahoni, can be evaluated at 7,000 to 8,000 in total. At the height of demographic expansion, their farming villages swarm on both banks of the Maroni and on the islands, penetrating more and more deeply into the interior of French Guiana, where in places they form small temporary groupings living in symbiosis with the Creole gold miners; the Boni recognize their right to cross their territory but not that of establishing villages in it.

433 648 [464] [465] [178] [166] [182] For a century the economy of the Refugee Blacks has been founded on a symbiosis with the Europeans and Creoles; they furnish specialized labor (construction, but above all, transport) in exchange for relatively high wages. This economy finds itself threatened by the gradual disappearance of gold mining; there is developing a tendency toward temporary emigration to the European work yards of Saint-Laurent analogous to that of the Saramaka of Surinam to French Guiana. This is a serious threat to the interior cohesion of the tribes.

6:Hurault--19 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE BONI

Villages

[3] [361] [133] Localization. The principal Boni villages have for 150 years been grouped on the Lawa (1) upstream from Abattis-Cottica Falls.

> 1. Let us remember that the Lawa and the Tapanahoni are the streams forming the Maroni. The Lawa constitutes the border between Surinam and French Guiana.

The limit of Boni country toward the south is vague. However, it is taken for granted that all the Abattis-Cottica belong [361] to the Boni. Boni farming villages and Djuka villages coexist downstream from the Abattis-Cottica as far as Abounasounga. Below Abounasounga begins Djuka country properly speaking (2).

> 2. In reality this is a zone of colonization, for the "great country" of the Djuka is the Tapanahoni. But the customary rights they possess on the Lawa lands are contested by no one.

423 643 [131] Traditionally, the Boni used to consider the whole of the upper basin of the Maroni as their domain or at the very least as territory under the authority of the grand man. Thus it was at

6:Hurault--142 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Distribution of Lands in the Neighborhood
of the Principal Boni Villages

Permanent villages
Boundary lines

Scale:

/K. or Cr. = Creek,
Lieu-dit = locality,
h. du grand man = habitation of the grand man,
Zone inondable = floodable zone./

Fig. 16.

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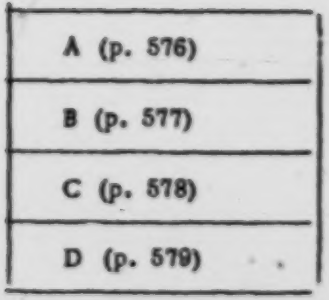

Chart of Positions of End Map /facing p. 576/

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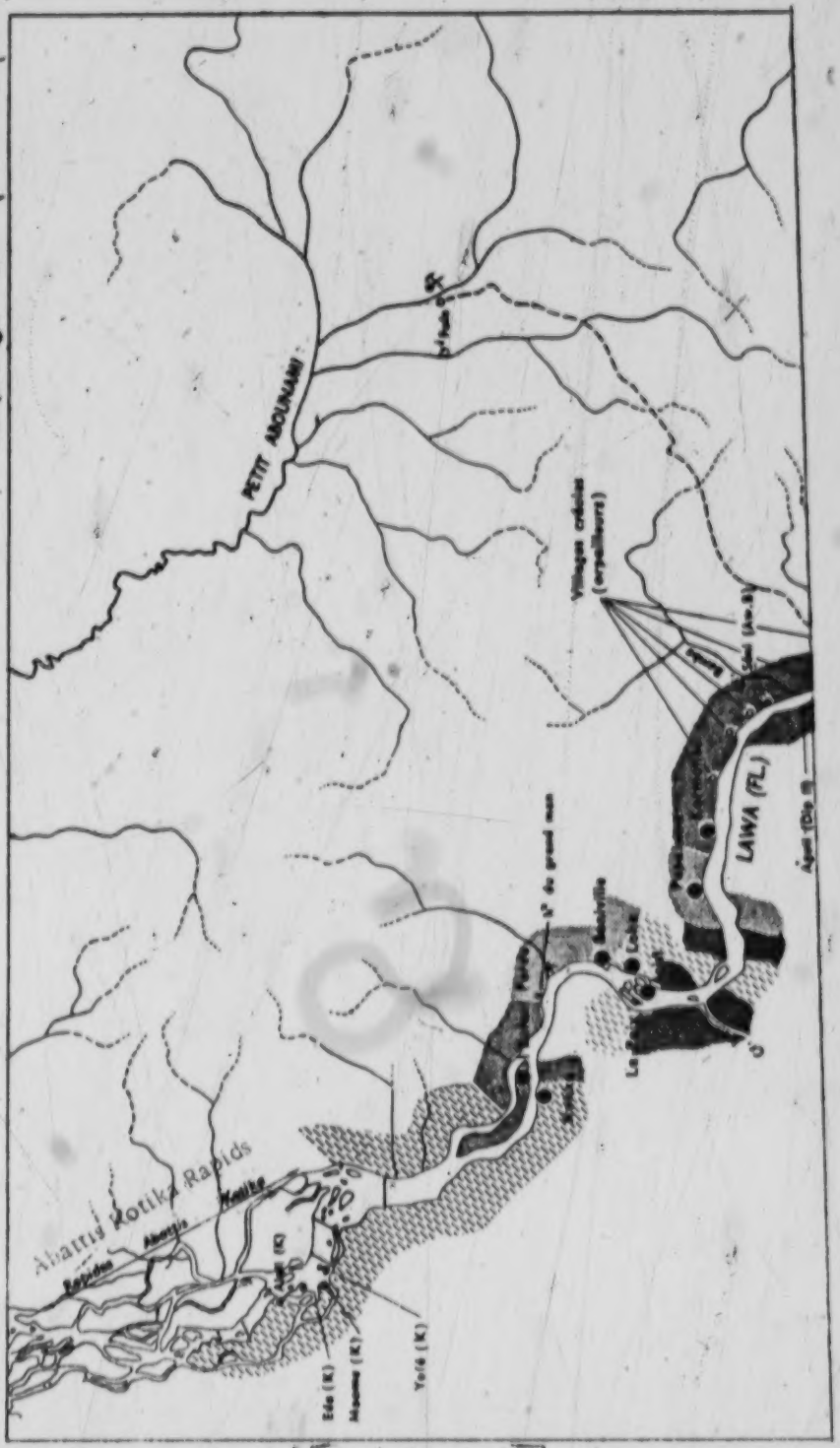

End Map - A

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6:Hurault--577 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

COURSE OF THE LAWA
(French Guiana)

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLING

[End Map - B]

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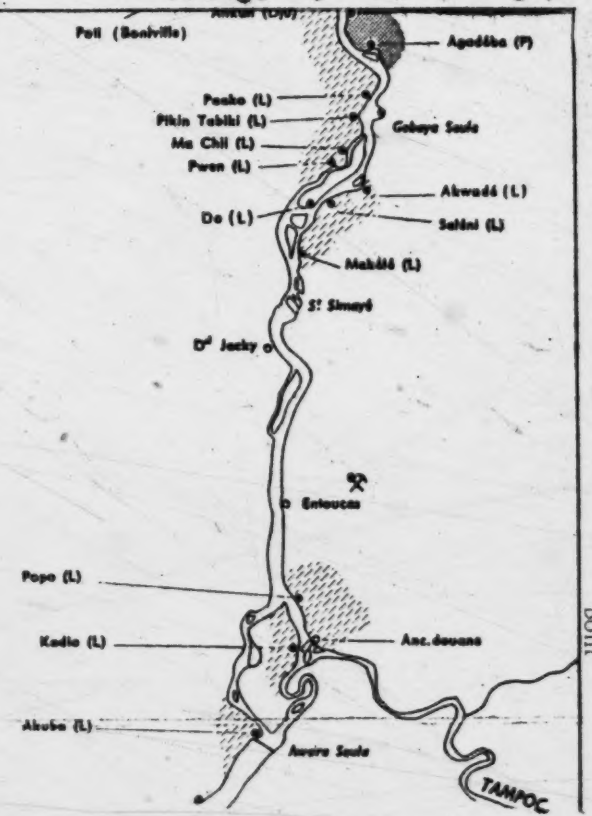
6:Hurault--578 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

Villages and Farming Habitations
in 1958

- ● Boni residence villages
- • Boni farming habitations
- o Creole villages
- O European establishments
- • Creole habitations
- ⚒ Small gold workings
- • Indian villages

Lands belonging to the Boni lineages

- (K) Kotika lo
- (Dip) Dipɛ̃lu lo
- (D) Dikan lo
- (L) Lapɛ̃ lo
- (Dju) Dju lo



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6:Hurault--579 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

Lands belonging to the Boni lineages

(D) Dikan lo

(L) Lapé lo

(Dju) Dju lo

(Aw.B.) Awara Bakka lo

(P) Papaïston lo

Scale 1/200.000

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Km.

Kadio (R.)

Abuabo (R.)

Anc. pavane

Ayaro Saale

TAMPOC

Nassi (R.)

LITANI

Indiens Oayana

Savane des Lianes

Tolinga (Papaïston)

Grand Kembi Saale

Petit Saut Saale

End Map - 5